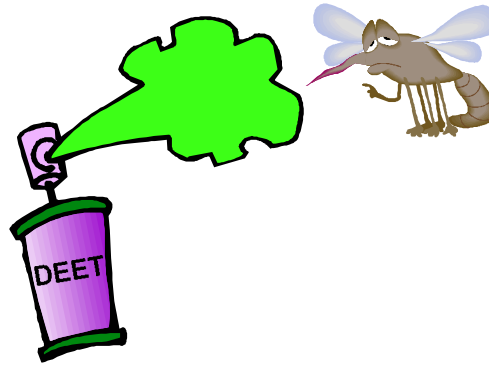


## Birds as Indicators

Crows, blue jays, magpies, hawks, owls and eagles are very susceptible to the West Nile Virus. If you see a freshly dead bird, please send it to the State Public Health Laboratory for testing. Your local Cooperative Extension Educator can assist you in sending a dead bird in for testing or call the Department of Health at 1-800-592-1861 for instructions.



## Humans

There is no human vaccine. If West Nile is detected in your community and you have a severe or unusual headache, you should seek medical care as soon as possible.

## Pregnant Women

Women who are pregnant should avoid being outdoors during the peak mosquito hours of dawn and dusk. Pregnant women should use mosquito repellent.

## Blood Donations

All donated blood is screened for the West Nile virus.

**Remember to vaccinate your horse!**

## Questions?

Call the South Dakota Department of Health at 1-800-592-1861.

## Local mosquito control contact information:



## South Dakota Department of Health

615 East 4th Street  
Pierre, South Dakota 57501  
1-800-592-1861 or 605-773-3737  
[www.state.sd.us/doh](http://www.state.sd.us/doh)

Updated April 2004

# Mosquitoes and the West Nile Virus



*PUBLIC ENEMY #1: Culex tarsalis  
This mosquito, found throughout South Dakota,  
is a highly capable carrier of the West Nile virus.*

South Dakota Department of Health  
[www.state.sd.us/doh/WestNile](http://www.state.sd.us/doh/WestNile)

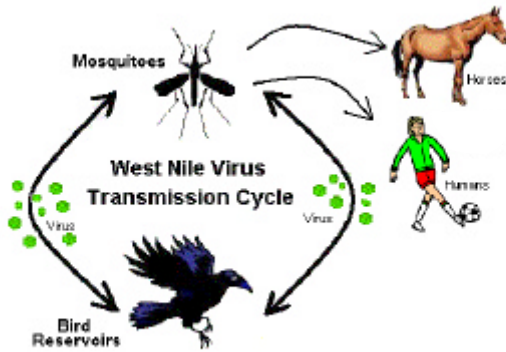
South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service  
<http://sdces.sdstate.edu/>

## What is the West Nile virus?

The West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne virus that primarily affects birds.

In humans an infection can cause West Nile Fever or encephalitis. Encephalitis is a brain infection that causes swelling and can lead to death.

In 2003 there were nearly 10,000 human cases of West Nile virus in the United States, including 264 deaths. South Dakota had 1,041 human cases and 14 deaths.



## How can I become infected?

Mosquitoes transmit the West Nile virus. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds.

The mosquito can then transmit the virus on to other birds, humans, horses or other animals.

## Mosquito Control & Protection

Mosquitoes need water to breed. Even small amounts of water provide breeding sites. Mosquitoes grow in just a few days. There may be multiple mosquito breeding places in your yard and around your farmyard.

Also remember that natural wetlands with high species diversity will have far fewer mosquitoes than disrupted wetlands.

## Protect Yourself

Mosquitoes should be killed or avoided whenever possible. Here are some other tips to reduce your exposure to mosquito bites:

- Use insect repellent containing DEET. Children and adults can use products with up to 30% DEET. Do not use DEET for infants less than 2 months old. Follow label directions carefully.
- Stay inside during the evening when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long sleeves and pants if you go outside.
- Screens on windows and doors should be "bug tight."
- Turn off any lights that can attract mosquitoes. Use yellow "bug lights" for outdoor lighting.
- Keep grass and weeds cut short to reduce mosquito hiding places.

- Treat, clean, and keep swimming pools circulating. Empty children's wading pools when not in use.
- Change water often in birdbaths, fountains, and potted plant trays.
- Empty water from buckets, tarps, toys, water troughs, or other containers often.
- Drain or fill ruts and puddles. Landscape to reduce standing water.
- Fill in tree holes and hollow stumps that collect water.
- Get rid of old cans, containers, pots or other water-holding vessels.
- Dispose of any old tires.
- Drill drainage holes in the bottom of outdoor containers, such as garbage cans.
- Adjust your roof gutters to eliminate standing water.
- Seal cisterns, septic tanks and water barrels.
- Turn over boats and wheelbarrows or keep them where they will not collect water.
- Fix leaky faucets and sprinklers.
- Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish, such as South Dakota native fathead minnows.

Many South Dakota communities have programs to kill mosquito larvae and spray or fog to kill adult mosquitoes. For more information, contact your local mosquito control person.